

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A method ~~for selecting a network service within a network having a plurality of network services~~, comprising:

providing a plurality of interface modules each capable of establishing communications with one or more of ~~the~~ a plurality of network services, wherein the plurality of network services comprise markup-language-based web services;

providing one logical access point to the plurality of interface modules to facilitate a service request from an application, the service request including one or more service related parameters;

determining, via a markup-language-based web services registry, service parameters that describe application interfaces of the plurality of web services;

comparing the one or more service related parameters to the service parameters associated with the plurality of network services to determine a best match among two or more compatible ones of the plurality network services capable of handling the service request, and in response, automatically selecting the network service whose service parameters provide the greatest compatibility with the one or more service related parameters; and

automatically establishing a connection between the application and the selected network service via the logical access point.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein providing a plurality of interface modules comprises providing a plurality of software objects accessible by messages received from the one logical access point.

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising receiving the one or more service related parameters via the one logical access point.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the one or more service related parameters via an external connection.
5. (Canceled)
6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein selecting the network service further comprises initiating a business agreement with the network service if the network service is not a member of the business agreement portion of the one or more service related parameters.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein providing a plurality of interface modules comprises providing a plurality of network address translation proxies accessible by messages received from the one logical access point.
8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising receiving the one or more service related parameters via the one logical access point.
9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising receiving the one or more service related parameters via an external connection.
10. (Canceled)
11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein selecting the network service further comprises initiating a business agreement with the network service if the network service is not a member of a business agreement portion of the one or more service related parameters.
12. (Currently amended) ~~A system for facilitating selection of a network service in response to a service request and associated service request parameters, comprising:~~

a plurality of service components distributed within at least one network, wherein the plurality of service components comprise markup-language-based web service components; and

an interface module having a plurality of interface objects each capable of establishing communications with one or more of the plurality of service components in response to a service request having associated service request parameters, the interface module including:

a lookup object in communication with a markup-language-based web services registry to establish connection parameters required between the one or more of the plurality of service components and one of the plurality of interface objects;

a data object in communication with the lookup object to provide parameters identifying attributes associated with the plurality of service components , wherein the attributes describe application interfaces of the plurality of service components; and

a single logical access point to allow external access to the plurality of interface objects, wherein the a selected network service is determined from two or more compatible service components of the plurality of service components capable of handling the service request, wherein the selected service network service has ~~having~~ attributes that are most compatible with the associated service request parameters and is automatically selected by the lookup object, wherein the logical access point facilitates automatically establishing a connection between an originator of the service request and the selected network service.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the plurality of interface objects includes software objects accessible by messages received from the single logical access point.

14. (Previously presented) The system of claim 12, wherein the lookup object comprises a matchmaking function to promote business agreements with the network service in response to the associated service request parameters.

15. (Previously presented) The system of claim 12, wherein the lookup object comprises a decision function to receive the associated service request parameters and to provide the required connection parameters in response to the associated service request parameters.

16. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the plurality of interface objects includes a plurality of network address translation proxies accessible by messages received from the single logical access point.

17. (Previously presented) The system of claim 16, wherein the lookup object comprises a matchmaking function to promote business agreements with the network service in response to the associated service request parameters.

18. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the lookup object comprises a decision function to receive the associated service request parameters and to provide the required connection parameters in response to the associated service request parameters.

19. (Currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium having computer-executable instructions for ~~selecting a network service from a network having a plurality of network services and associated service attributes that describe application interfaces of the plurality of web services, the computer-executable instructions performing steps comprising:~~

providing a plurality of interface modules each capable of establishing communications with one or more of the a plurality of network services associated service attributes that describe application interfaces of the plurality of web services, wherein the plurality of network services comprise markup-language-based web services, and wherein one logical access point to the plurality of interface modules allows external invocation of the network service by an application;

determining, via a markup-language-based web services registry, the attributes associated with the plurality of network services;

receiving network service related parameters with the invocation;

automatically selecting among two or more compatible network services capable of handling the invocation to determine the network service whose associated service attributes most closely match the service related parameters; and

automatically establishing a connection between the application and the selected network service.

20. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 19, wherein the computer-executable instruction step of providing a plurality of interface modules comprises providing a plurality of software objects accessible by messages received from the one logical access point.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 19, wherein the computer-executable instruction step of automatically selecting the network service further comprises using the service related parameters to initiate a business agreement with the network service.

25. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 19, wherein the computer-executable instruction step of providing a plurality of interface modules comprises providing a plurality of network address translation proxies accessible by messages received from the one logical access point.

26. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 25, wherein the computer-executable instruction step of receiving service related parameters comprises receiving the service related parameters via the one logical access point.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 26, wherein the computer-executable instruction step of selecting the network service further comprises using the service related parameters to initiate a business agreement with the network service.

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein selecting the network service further comprises selecting the network service that is a member of a business agreement portion of the one or more service related parameters.

31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein selecting the network service further comprises using a cost function of the one or more service related parameters to select the most cost effective network service from the plurality of network services.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein selecting the network service further comprises using a cost function of the one or more service related parameters to select a most cost effective network service from the plurality of network services.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising automatically establishing a connection between the application and the selected network service.

34. (Previously presented) The system of claim 12, wherein the lookup object automatically connects the selected network service to the external access via the interface objects.

35. (Currently amended) A method ~~for selecting a service component from a network having a plurality of service components, wherein the plurality of service components comprise markup language-based web service components, the method comprising:~~

providing a plurality of interface modules capable of establishing network communications with the a plurality of service components that comprise markup-language-based web service components;

determining, via a markup-language-based web services registry, service parameters that describe application interfaces of the plurality of service components;

providing one logical access point to the plurality of interface modules to facilitate a service request from an application, the service request including service parameters having a business agreement portion that identifies two or more compatible service components capable of handling the service request and having a current business agreement with the application; and

automatically selecting the service component that is included in the business agreement portion of the service request and having a best match between the service parameter ~~compatible with~~ and one or more service related parameters of the service request, wherein the service component is automatically connected to the application in response to automatically selecting the service component.

36. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 35, wherein the service parameters further include a cost function to facilitate selection of the service component whose cost is minimized ~~when more than one compatible service component exists in the business agreement portion.~~

37. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 35, wherein the service parameters further include an application identification to facilitate selection of the service component whose service level is commensurate with the application identification.

38. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 35, wherein the service parameters further include a service provider identification to facilitate selection of the

service component whose service level is commensurate with the service provider identification.

39. (Currently amended) An ~~interface module for facilitating selection of a network service in response to a service request and associated service request parameters~~, the interface ~~module~~ apparatus comprising:

a plurality of interface objects each capable of receiving a service request having associated service request parameters and establishing communications with one or more of a plurality of service components distributed within a network in response to the service request, wherein the plurality of service components comprise markup-language-based web service components;

a lookup object in communication with a markup-language-based web services registry to establish connection parameters required between the one or more of the plurality of service components and one of the plurality of interface objects;

a data object in communication with the lookup object to provide parameters identifying attributes associated with the plurality of service components, wherein the attributes describe application interfaces of the plurality of service components; and

a single logical access point to allow external access to the plurality of interface objects, wherein the network service having attributes that are most compatible with the associated service request parameters is automatically selected by the lookup object from two or more compatible ones of the plurality of service components capable of handling the service request, wherein the logical access point facilitates automatically establishing a connection between an originator of the service request and the selected network service.

40. (Currently amended) The apparatus ~~module~~ of claim 39, wherein the plurality of interface objects includes software objects accessible by messages received from the single logical access point.

41. (Currently amended) The apparatus ~~module~~ of claim 40, wherein the lookup object comprises a matchmaking function to promote business agreements with the network service in response to the associated service request parameters.

42. (Currently amended) The apparatus ~~module~~ of claim 41, wherein the lookup object further comprises a decision function to receive the associated service request parameters and to provide the required connection parameters in response to the associated service request parameters.

43. (Currently amended) The apparatus ~~module~~ of claim 39, wherein the plurality of interface objects includes a plurality of network address translation proxies accessible by messages received from the single logical access point.

44. (Currently amended) The apparatus ~~module~~ of claim 43, wherein the lookup object comprises a matchmaking function to promote business agreements with the network service in response to the associated service request parameters.

45. (Currently amended) The apparatus ~~module~~ of claim 44, wherein the lookup object further comprises a decision function to receive the associated service request parameters and to provide the required connection parameters in response to the associated service request parameters.

46. (Currently amended) The apparatus ~~module~~ of claim 39, wherein the lookup object automatically connects the selected network service to the external access via the interface objects.